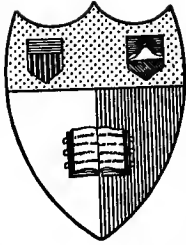


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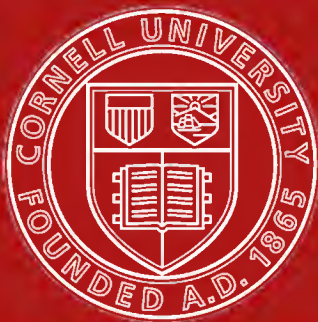
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Why Italy must have her frontier on the



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Why Italy must have

her frontier on the Brenner

(WITH 5 DIAGRAMS)



:: NOVEMBER 1918 ::



Why Italy must have

her frontier on the Brenner

(WITH 5 DIAGRAMS)







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*Until that day, O green Raetia summits, when on you the  
Latin banner shines, wretched will be he who, promising  
peace, has not his hand on his sword.*

CARDUCCI.

## WHY ITALY MUST HAVE HER FRONTIER ON THE BRENNER

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A frontier politically logic and militarily just must, possibly, be determined by geographic elements which in themselves represent a natural barrier in the relations between the neighbouring peoples and offer strong foundations on which the defence may militarily be based.

A mere glance at any geographical map very clearly shows which is this *natural frontier* with regard to the north-east of Italy.

The huge impervious *massifs* of the Ortler, Oetz, Stubay, Ziller and the High Tauern (Gross Venediger, Gross Glockner, Hochnarr, Ankegl) clearly stand out in relief on the mountain region and in themselves give the idea of a large strip distinctly separating the Trentino and Carinzia mountains from those of the Voralberg and Salisburgh.

And indeed these vast *massifs*, perennially covered by extensive glaciers and protruding towards the sky with summits all more than 9000 feet high, have the aspect of an immense wall about 250 Kilometres long towards which all the roads coming both from the north and the south gradually lessen in number and finally disappear in the mountain vallies and eternal snows. Only two vast crevices — the Rezia Pass (Reschen Hill) to the west of the Oetz and the Italia Pass (Brenner Hill) between the Stubay and the Ziller, — open up two immense gaps in the great wall: the former, Rezia Pass, is traversed only by a vehicle road and the latter, the Brenner, by a road and a railway.

All the other communication are but rare and difficult mule tracks and mountain paths.

This « wall » which to the east is connected by the Villach mountains to the Julian mountains represents the ideal military boundry for Italy.

In fact, from a military point of view, a frontier must require only a few forces for the defence, it must permit easy movement of troops behind it so as to allow the rapid transfer of reserves to the points threatened and finally it should offer the possibility of acting in counter-offensive against the hostile masses moving to the attack.

Now the barrier Oetz Stubay Ziller High Tauern would answer perfect-

ly to these contiditions, but other and different reasons impose that the military aspirations be limited to what is only strictly indispensable.

The frontier, instead of following this barrier in all its length, will have, on its arriving at the Pizzo dei Tre Signori (Ziller Group), to turn south towards the Hochgall and then, touching the summits of the Kreutz Spitz and Hochhorn Spitz, reach the Carnia Alps along the crests of the mountains dominating the Sexten Valley from the east.

This line of heights, though most of them surpass the altitude of 9000 feet, is certainly less strong than the barrier above indicated on account of the easy nature of the broad spur of Dobbiaco (Toblach), but it also presents good defensive conditions, especially if care is taken to include within the frontier the small walley of Sexten, which, *for the defence*, has very great value as it is possible to develop from it a grave threat for anyone attempting to operate against the above mentioned Dobbiaco spur along the end of the Drava Valley.

This *frontier* — which may be termed the *minimum* — has certainly not the advantages of the one running through the High Tauern, but it adapts itself to the hydrographic lines giving to Italy all the upper basin of the Adige and excluding all the upper basin of the Drava.

It responds to the conditions of life and communications of the region in that, on a length of about 200 kilometres, it cuts through only three roads (Reschen, Brennero and Dobbiaco) and it generally traverses glaciers and mountain areas concerning which it is not easy that any quarrels or contestations should arise.

It responds to the economy of military forces as, of the 200 kilometres of its development, only about forty are to be considered militarily apt to the carrying out of operations.

And finally it gives tranquility to the neighbouring populations on the north, as the difficult and impervious nature of the terrain where it runs seems to have been made on purpose to esclude any inclination to carry out military operations of certain importance either from the north or from the south. And indeed any massing of troops for an offensive action made on either side would after be obliged to go through the Rezia opening (Reschen Pass) or the Brenner Pass, and thus all the action of attack would inevitably be reduced to close fighting in points where the passage is obligatory.

Any other frontier further back would constitute but an artificial amputation which would cause to exist in Italy a super-sensitiveness on this side and oblige the State to expenses and armaments not in harmony with the life which nations must have and with the ideas which will inspire the minds which will soon dictate peace to the world.

Let us consider, for example, the line which could be suggested for a frontier more to south of the one just mentioned. This line is identified by heights which from Mount Cevedale go to the Pizzo dei Tre Signori and having, as an entrenchment in front of it, the hollow Venosta Valley Isargo. This line would run for more than 120 Kilometres all on *terrain militarily practicable*. It would also require forces more than three times the quantity necessary to garrison the minimum boundary (Reschen Brenner - Toblach) without moreover mentioning the necessity of keeping in the rear strong reserves because the ground, allowing manoeuvring, permits the enemy to choose the points of attack on a very

extensive front. And this is facilitated for the enemy by the fact that the line under consideration not only leaves open the Rezia (Reschen) pass, the Brenner and the Dobbiaco (Toblach) spur, but also places at his disposal, for the gathering together of his troops, the large basins of Brunesco, Bressanone, Merano, and, though in a minor measure, of Bolzano.

Besides, this line would result very artificial in all its details, as the southern tributaries of the Upper Adige and Isarco, and the northern ones of the Noce and Avisio, penetrating in various directions with their heads into the *massif* which rises amidst the deep crevices formed by these rivers, determine a winding watershed, with many irregular salients and bays, without any real military value.

It would be necessary to rectify it with a series of amputations which, cutting off heads of valleys and roads, would give a unilateral solution in the military sense, and be so artificial in its trace that it would constitute an everlasting source of contestation and quarrels.

Considering the communications only, it is enough to mention that 9 great highways would be cut and, what is more important, the valley of the Adige, the life artery of all the Upper Adige, would be closed.

Recapitulating, the frontier at the Brenner gives the following advantages:

1. that it adapts itself to a well defined geographical element which in itself acts as a separating element between the life of the neighbouring peoples.
2. that it runs for the most part on unpracticable ground which constitutes a natural barrier which is easy to defend, from both sides, with small forces and a few defensive works.
3. that it has, in the rear, good cross roads thus allowing the rapid movement of forces towards those points which may be threatened, and this also exists on both sides.

**It is therefore the ideal boundary between two peoples, in that it places them in a perfect state of equality from all points of view.**

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We Italians must also remember that the mountain mass constitutes an obstacle particularly powerful to the north but of much less value instead to the east (Julian Alps).

Now from this simple observation, even a person knowing nothing of the military art can easily deduct that attacks against Italy will be much easier to effect from the east, across the lesser obstacle, than from the north and that it would be necessary to use the smallest possible number of troops for the defence at the north so as to have a greater number available in the eastern area.

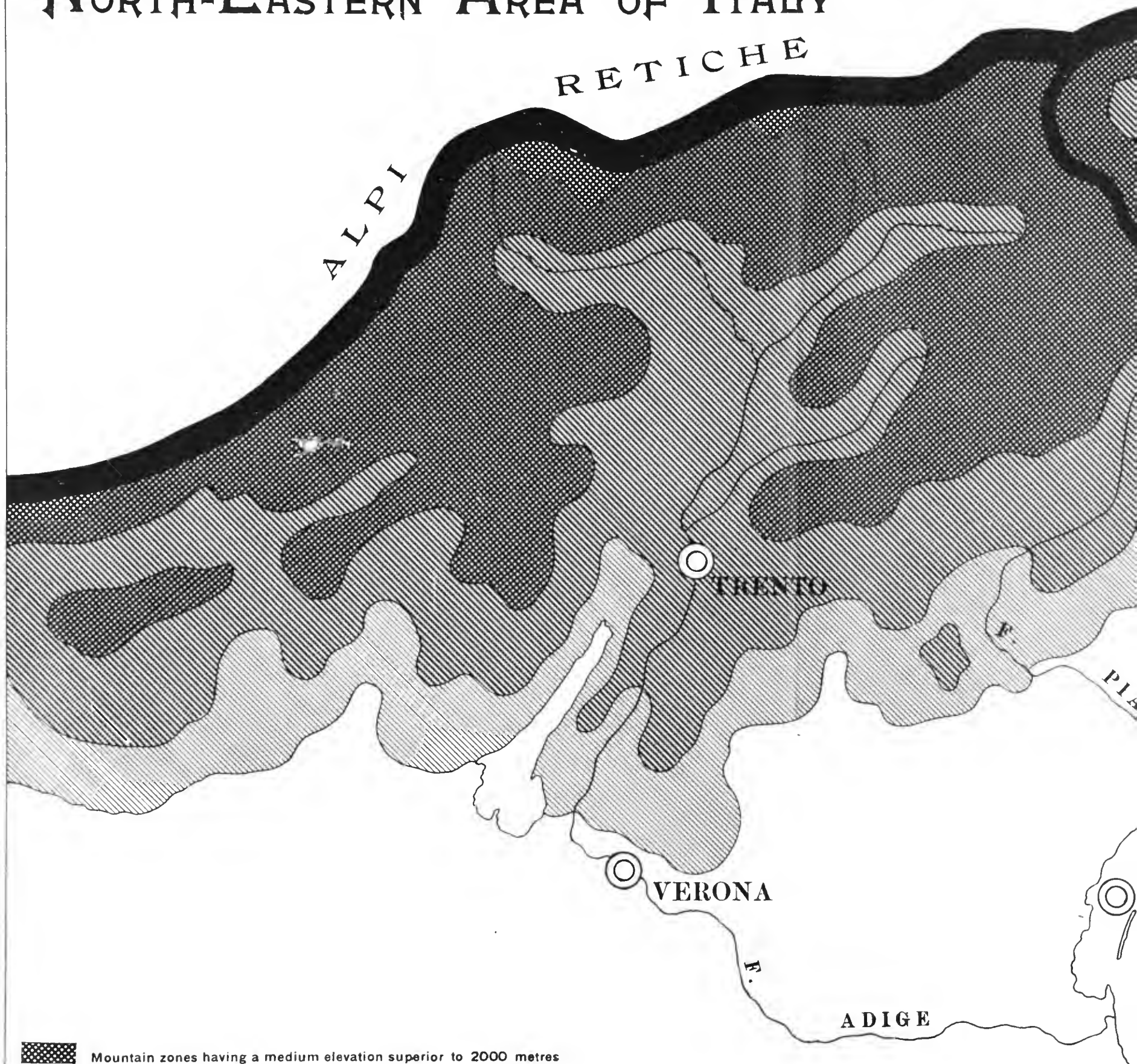
This can be obtained only by penetrating deeply into the mountainous mass precisely as far as the barrier Oetz Stubaier Ziller, the only one which allows a real saving of forces and permits the constituting of a mass of manoeuvre in Julian Venetia, where the ground, having fewer obstacles lends itself more easily to hostile military operations tending toward the invasion of the Venetian-Friuli plains.

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# SCHEMATIC SKETCH OF THE NORTH-EASTERN AREA OF ITALY

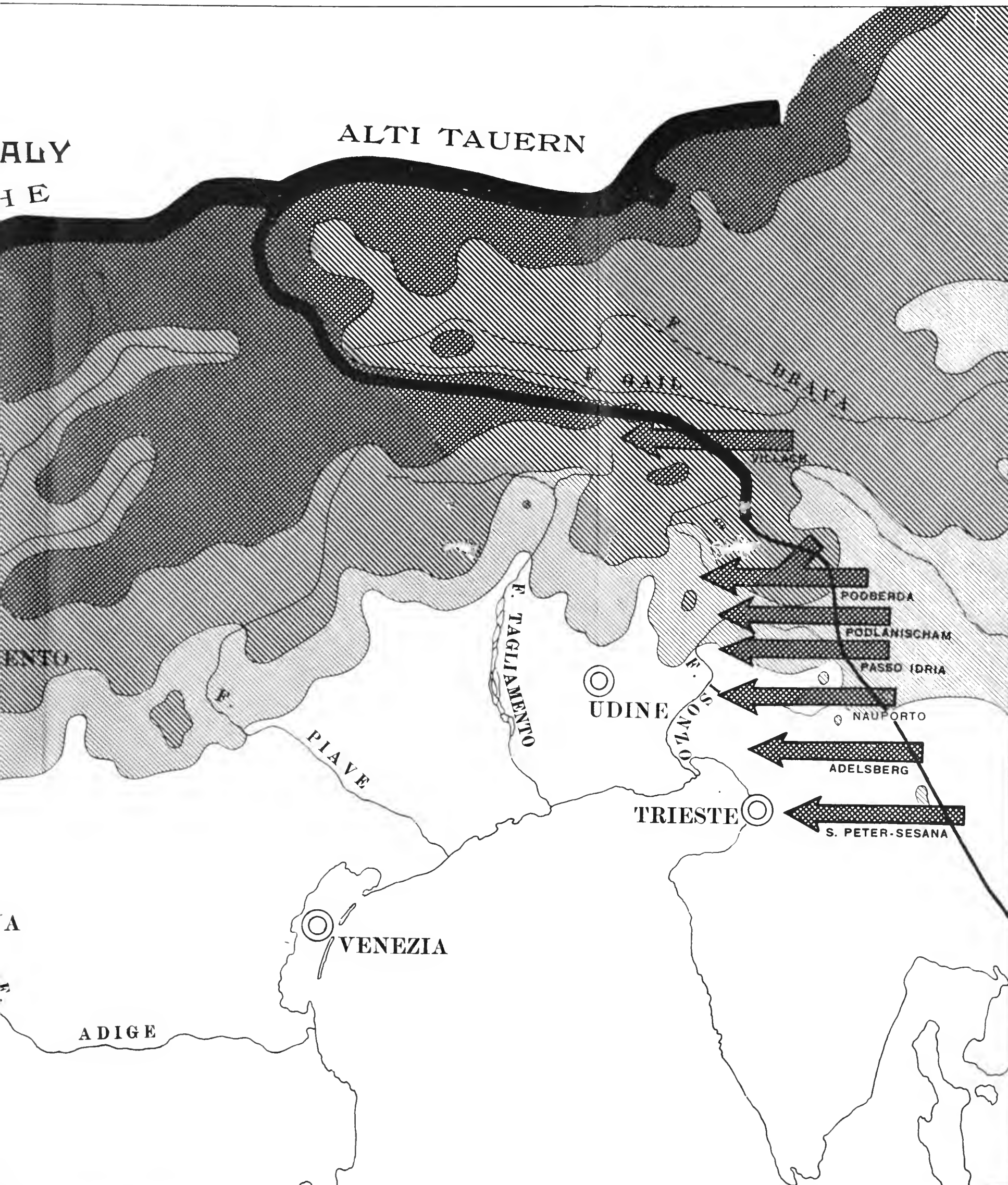
ALPI  
RETICHE



- Mountain zones having a medium elevation superior to 2000 metres
- between 1000 and 2000 metres
- under 1000 metres

The broad Alpine mass which protects at the north the Venetia-Friuli plains will allow the Italian Army





Julian plains will allow the Italian Army to mass in Julian Venetia so as to oppose any attempted invasion.



# SCHEMATIC SKETCH OF THE





THE ELEVATIONS UPON WHICH THE ITALIAN FRONTIER C









Gruppo dell'Oetz

2799 Gioia della Stelvia

3200 Passo di Rezia (RESCHEN)

3746 Palla Bianca

Gioia della Stelvia 2759

M. Cevedale

Cima Rontscher

Val d'Ultima 500

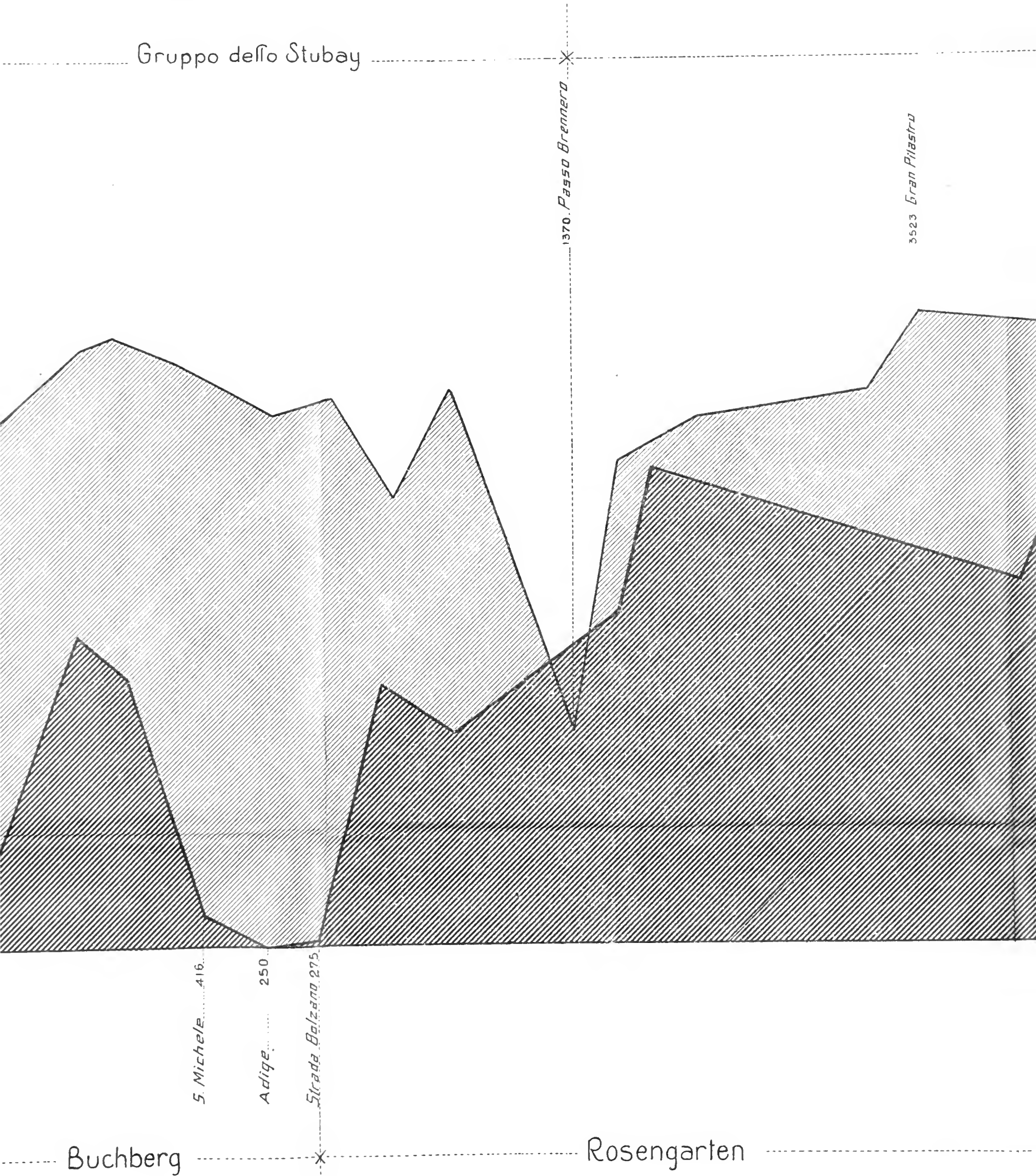
# THE DIVIDING MASSIFS



NATURAL MINIMUM FRONTIER (AT THE BRENNER)



ARTIFICIAL FRONTIER (BEHIND VENOSTA VALLEY-ISARGO)

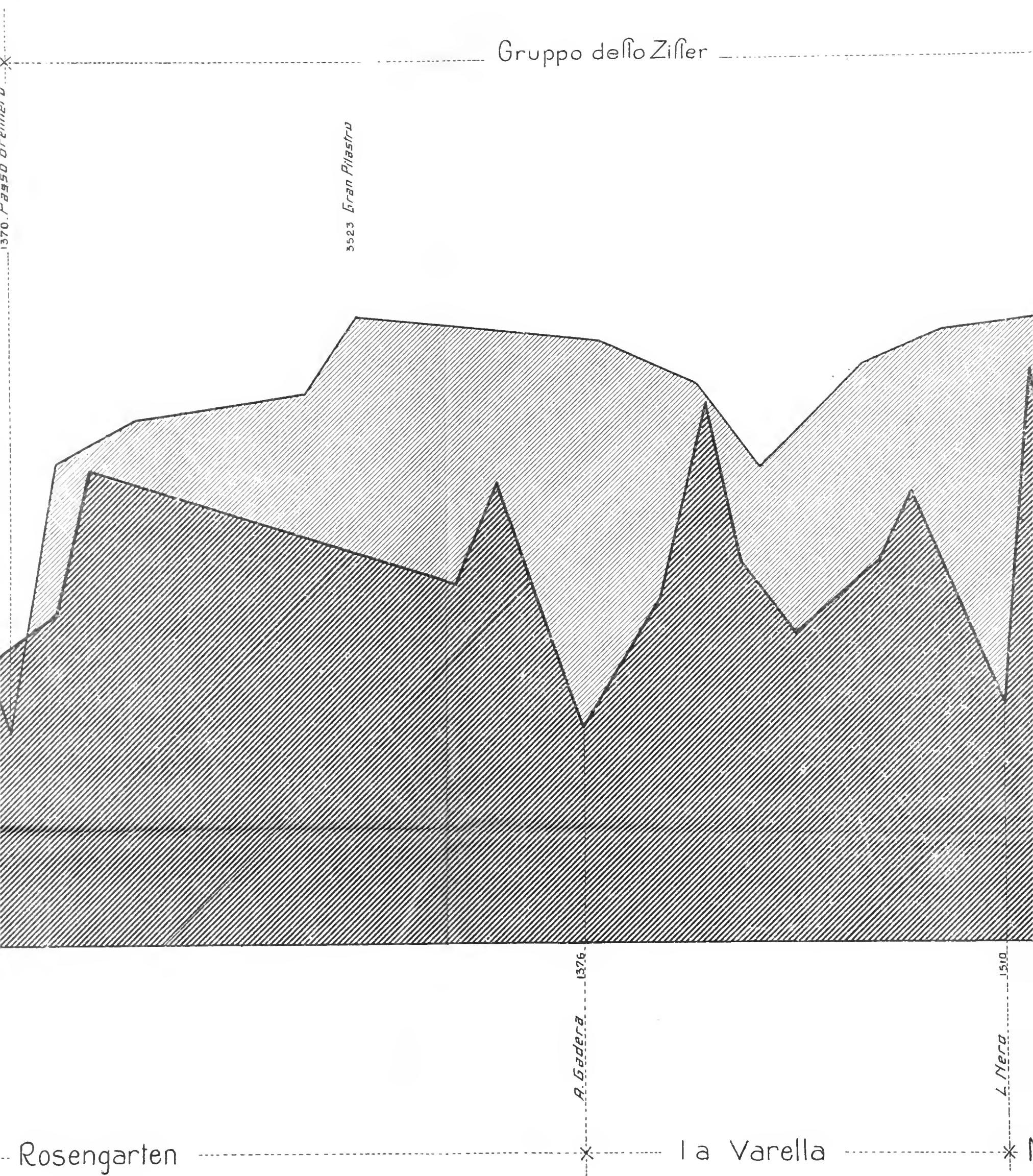




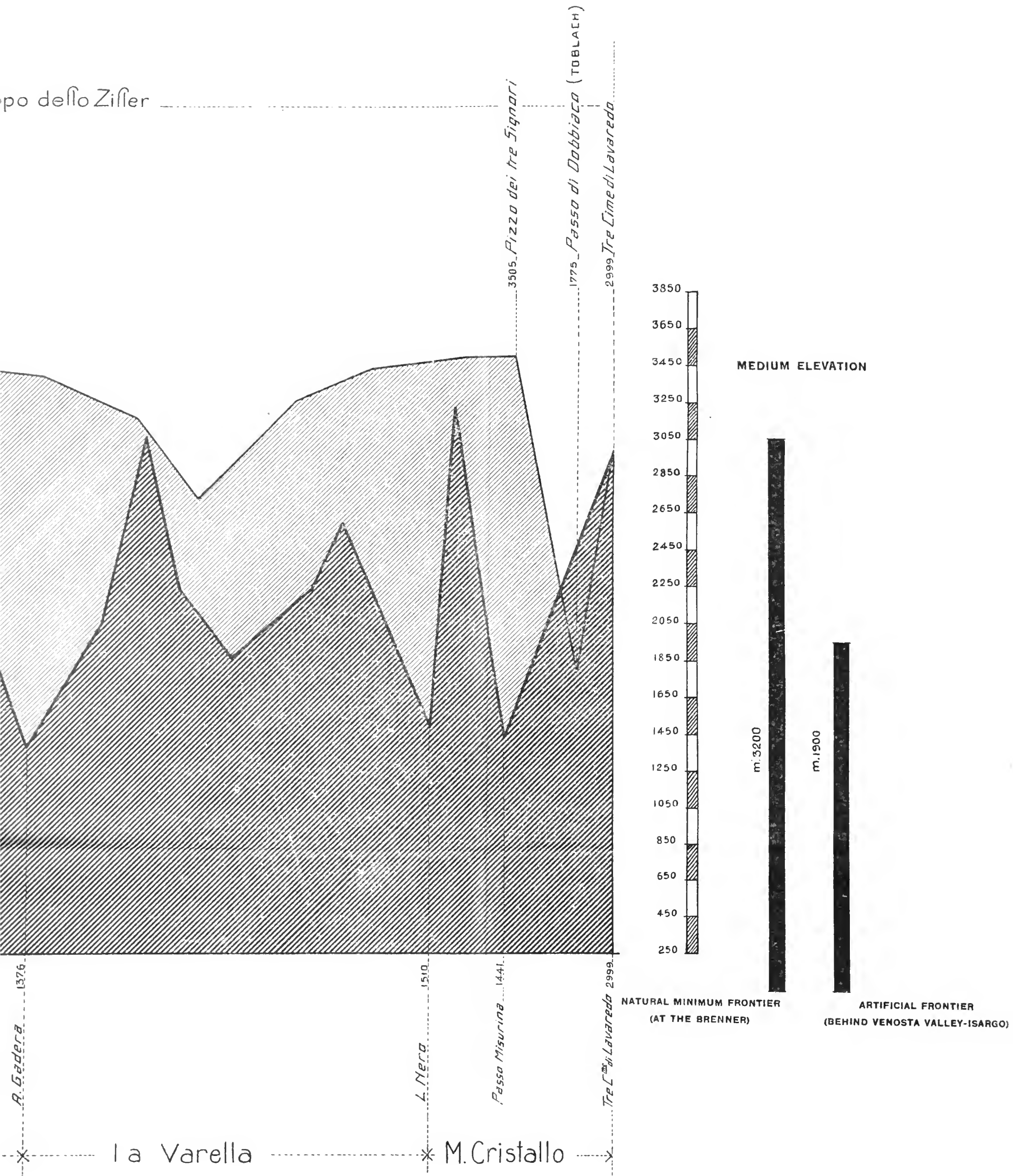
# MASSIFS

R)

-ISARGO)







UNPASSABLE

Gruppo dell' Oetz

Passo di Rezia  
(Reschen)

M. Cevedale

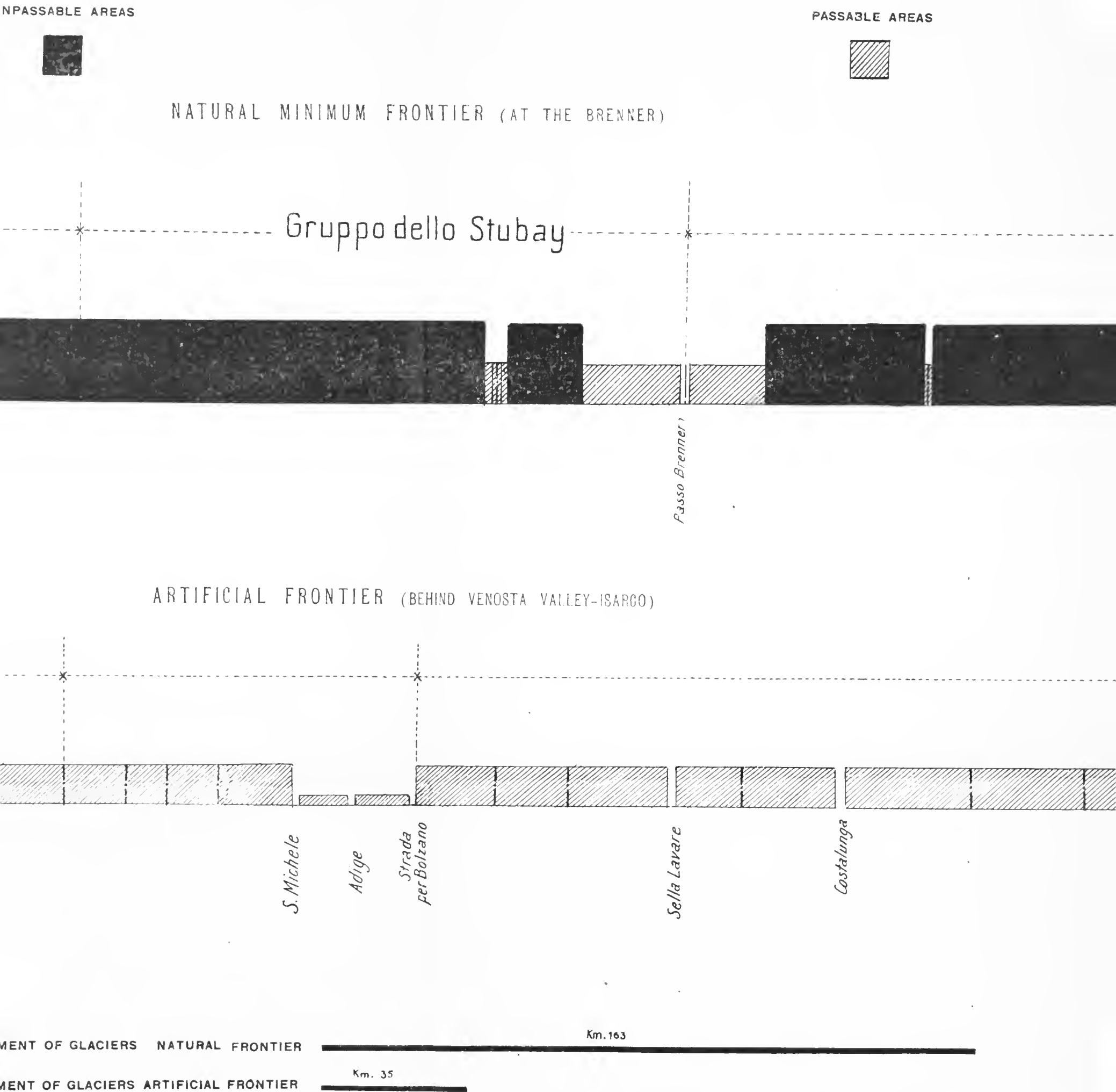
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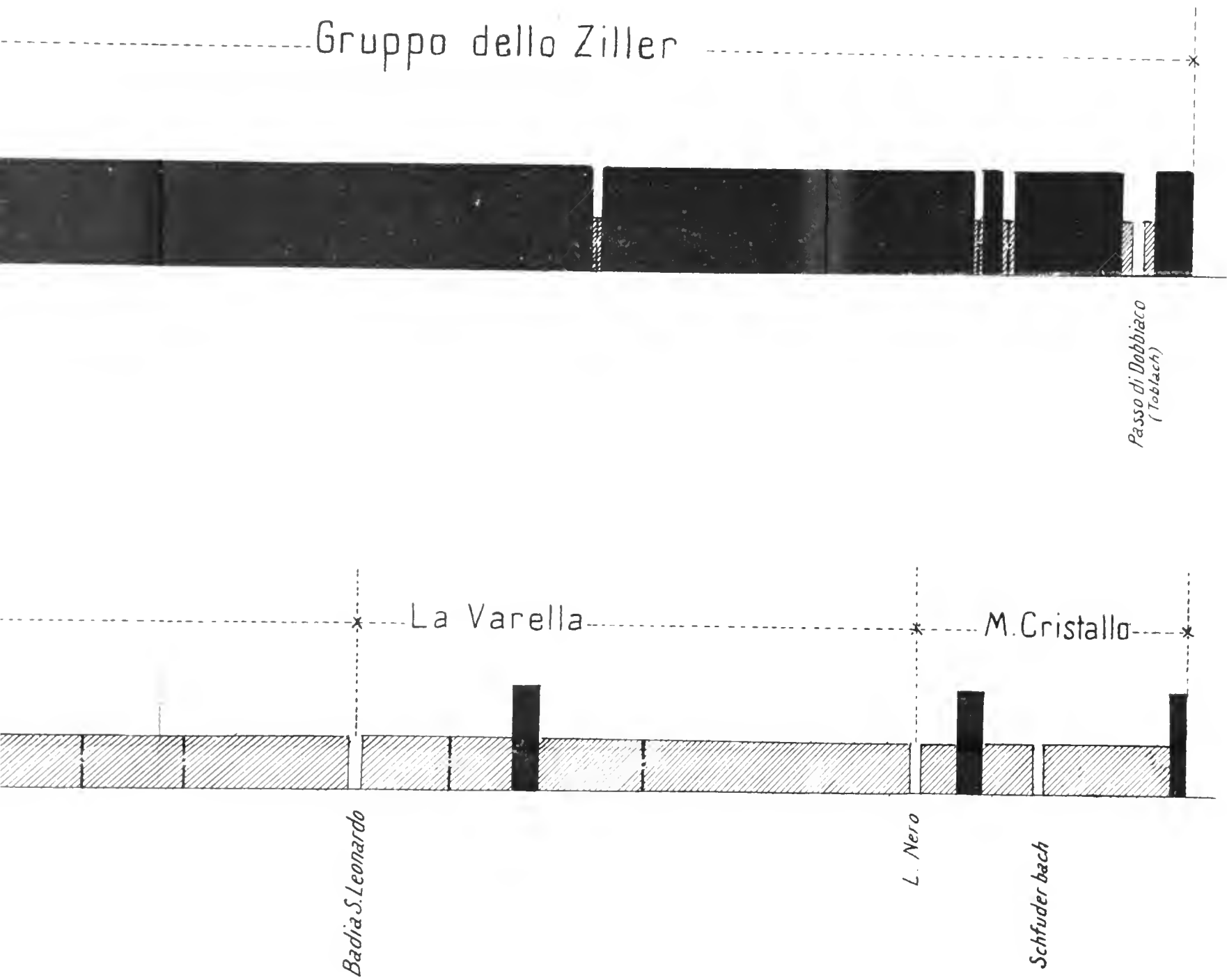
- a) If for the defence of the minimum natural frontier (at t
- b) The natural minimum frontier (at the Brenner) cuts thre
- c) The minimum natural frontier (at the Brenner) shows al  
ground which is nearly all (120 km.) to be consider

# THE PASSAGE ACROSS THE FRONTIER

FROM A MILITARY VIEWPOINT



ntier (at the Brenner) a force A is required, for the defence of the artificial frontier (behind Venosta Valley-Isargo) a force sixfol  
) cuts through only 3 roads. The artificial frontier (to the south of Venosta Valley-Isargo) cuts through 9.  
shows altogether only 40 km. of ground which may be considered militarily passable. The artificial frontier (to the south of V  
e considered militarily passable.

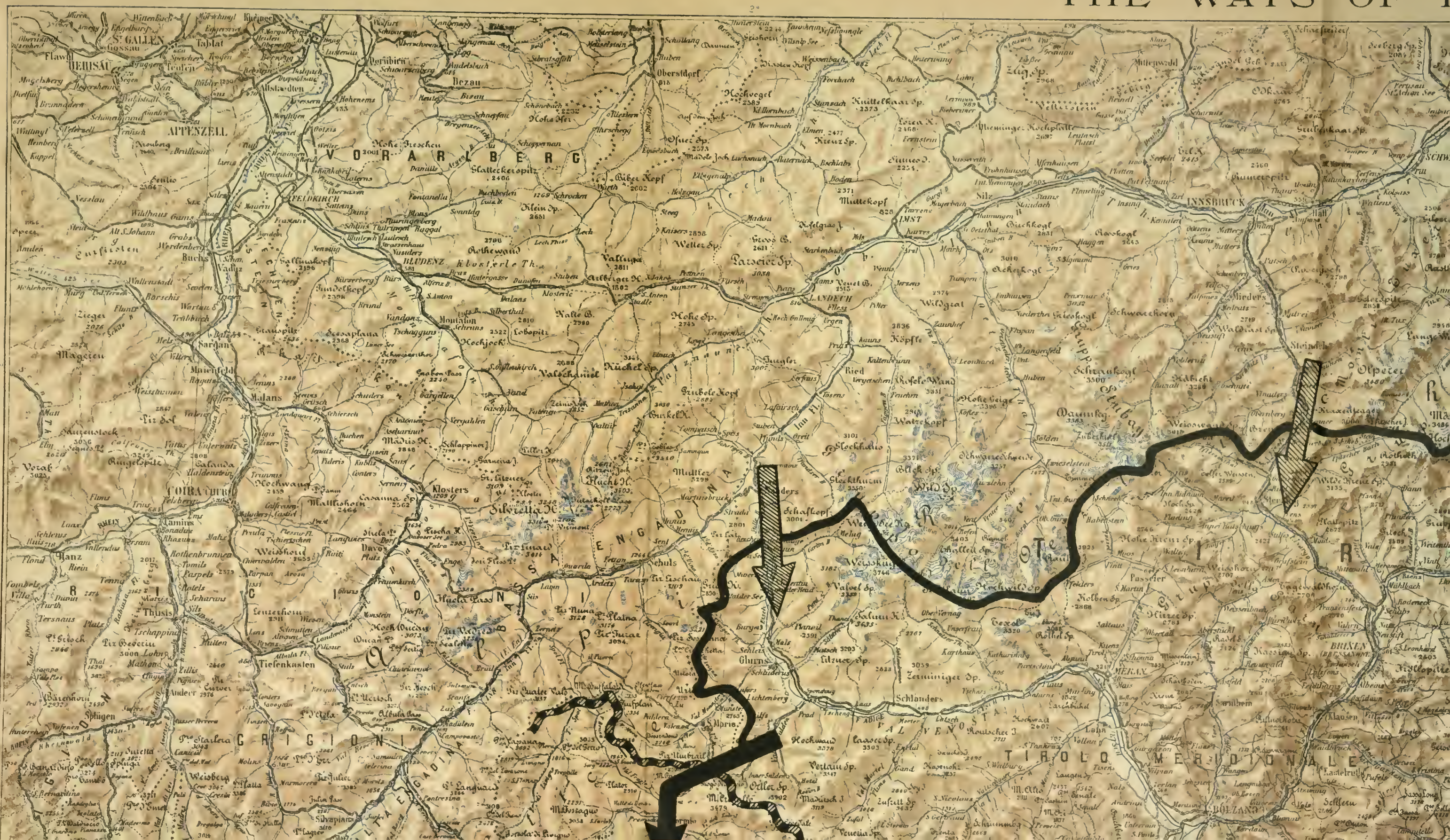


orce sixfold would be required, that is, 6 A.

south of Venosta Valley - Isargo) runs along



# THE WAYS OF I





# THE WAYS OF INVASION INTO ITALY























ISTITUTO GEOGRAFICO MILITARE (STAMPA 1918)

RIPRODUZIONE SISTEMA GLIAMAS

*Ferrovia a doppio binario*

ad un bivio

a trattamento ridotto e tranquillo

*in sede propria*

10





1°

Scala chilometrica di 1 a 500000

0

	Per ferrovia a doppio binario		Strade di 1° classe		Passo Alpino		mulottero
	ad un binario		2°				trattura
	scartamento ridotto e tranvia in sede propria		3°				stradone
			4°				difficile





RIPRODUZIONE VIETATA  
(Legge 10 Sett. 1882, N° 1012.)























